





## Contents

Chair and Chief Executive's Report	3
Our Services	7
Our Homes	8
Our Performance	10
Our Money	12
Our Business	17
Our People – staff	18
Our People – board	19

## Chair and Chief Executive's Report

We cannot talk about 2020-21 without talking about the pandemic. It has certainly been an interesting year to say the least and, let's be honest, one none of us will forget! Looking back the reality is that none of us really saw it coming. Covid-19 wasn't on our risk map and so we had to think on our feet and adapt quickly. We are proud that we responded quickly, continued to deliver a service and demonstrated our true resilience. The pace of change has been dramatic as we have had to rethink the way we work, communicate, collaborate and deliver services. 2020-21 has definitely tested us all.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we live, work, socialise, travel and communicate and not all of this has been negative. If you had asked us in January 2020 if we could deliver a service from home we would have said no. If you had told us that we would hold Board or resident meetings by Zoom, we would have laughed!



Karen Cooper, CEO

However, the pandemic has shown us that never have home, family and community been so important. We have been locked in our homes, with (or sometimes without) those we love and this has had an enormous impact on many of us. Those frontline and emergency workers kept us all going and rightly we celebrated their importance on our doorsteps. As we emerge, slowly, we won't forget the sacrifices made by so many.



Cathy McCarthy, Chair

At PCHA we pride ourselves on being a community organisation with a strong relationship with our residents but we saw an even greater level of positive engagement with residents during lockdown, in spite of not being in the office!

We have really valued this, particularly talking to many residents with whom we may have had limited contact before lockdown. Our new Resident Engagement Policy aims to build on these new relationships. Our aim is for PCHA residents to have a real opportunity to positively engage with us and to play a constructive role in evaluating and improving our services both operationally and strategically for the year ahead. This will be a key focus of our work, alongside responding to the resident survey planned for the spring.

This year has challenged our thinking about service delivery and ways of working and we have a real opportunity to rethink how we work and deliver services to our residents. One thing is absolutely clear: there is no going back and we will need to be more agile and responsive in the way we work in future.

Going forward we are focussed on three key challenges:

- increasing poverty/unemployment amongst residents
- keeping residents safe in their homes
- supporting an escalation in mental health issues for residents and staff

Whilst these have always been a part of our work, we recognise that we will need to put additional resources into these areas over the next few years.

Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to our Board, staff and residents for how they have responded to the challenges of the pandemic and accepted the enormity of the changes in the way we work and deliver services.





## Our Services

Throughout the last year our priority was to keep residents, staff and partners safe whilst still trying to deliver a service. This was a somewhat of a challenge, particularly in the first lockdown, but we adapted quickly and focussed on carrying out essential repairs and speaking to all our residents on an individual basis. However, we struggled in those first months as our system was not really geared up for us working from home. Therefore, in order to deliver services we invested in a cloud based phone system so that we can answer calls from wherever we are.

We have had to keep the office largely closed to visitors and whilst we have missed residents being able to pop in, this has enabled staff to work more flexibly and offer extended service hours.

One positive was the fact that we called every resident to check on their wellbeing and offer support where we could. This really helped strengthen our existing relationships and build new ones.

We are committed to providing fantastic services for residents; services that are accessible, easy to use, responsive and reliable and 2020-21 saw us have to adapt our way of working to deliver this.

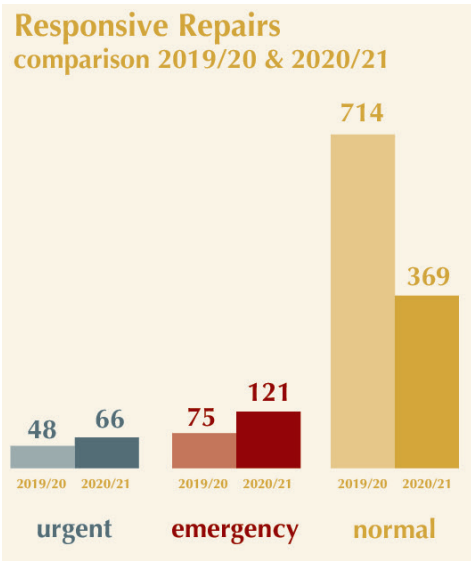
**2020-21 saw  
us building and  
strengthening  
relationships with  
our residents**

# Our Homes

The first quarter of the year and the first lockdown meant that we could only carry out essential repairs which was frustrating for residents although in the main they were extremely understanding.

Once restrictions eased we were able to catch up and ensure that any outstanding repairs were completed fairly quickly. However, it was challenging to manage residents' expectations and the various restrictions to the way we worked. Equally many of our contractors suffered with staff shortages and challenges in getting materials. As a result we saw a significant drop in the day to day repairs carried out over the period. The chart on the right reflects this and demonstrates the increase in emergency and urgent repairs against a 50% drop in the number of normal repairs.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 restrictions also meant that we did not undertake any normal planned programmes of works as we were conscious of the possible risk of increased infection and so we took a decision to delay these.



## Asset Management Strategy Phases (2020–25)

### Years 1-2



- Understanding our assets
- Building asset intelligence
- Understanding residents needs/expectations
- Building safety
- Decent homes
- Developing 110 Croydon Rd
- Move towards making existing homes greener

### Years 3-5



- Delivering new homes
- Improving energy efficiency
- Meeting future residents needs
- Delivering value for money

On a positive note our gas servicing and other critical health and safety works continued pretty much as usual, with only a few issues where residents were shielding. At the year end we were 100% compliant on our gas servicing.

This strategy sets out PCHA's approach to asset management over the next few years to 2025. However, give the current environment and the current challenges, this strategy is divided into two phases shown above.

Additionally during the year we drafted our Asset Management Strategy; the key strands of this strategy are shown in the second diagram opposite and in the chart above.

During the year we started developing a new stock condition database to help us better understand our stock and make informed decisions on investment; this will help shape our planned programmes over the next three years.

# Our Performance

## Arrears

In the early part of the year the Covid-19 pandemic brought challenges as we saw some residents moved onto furlough and others who were self employed struggling to maintain their income. At its peak we saw arrears increase to 5.8% in the first lockdown and we saw a big increase in Universal Credit claims although this levelled out during the year. Arrears steadily reduced in the second half of the year as we changed our approach and focused on supporting residents with welfare benefit claims and budgeting. At the end of year we closed at 4.2% – a marginal improvement on the previous year’s performance.

## Voids (empty properties)

The pandemic didn’t stop people moving home or seeking their first home with PCHA and during the year we let eight properties. Undoubtedly our void turnaround suffered as we got to grips with virtual viewings and socially distanced lettings! Turnaround was also affected by the labour shortages and supply line issues that resulted from the pandemic. That said, the quality of our lettings was maintained and we are pleased to welcome eight new residents and their families to PCHA.

## ASB (anti-social behaviour)

We saw a steady increase in anti-social behaviour over the year. Our homes have never been so important and many residents found themselves working from home, home schooling or simply trapped indoors. Being stuck indoors was difficult for us all and undoubtedly it placed an enormous strain on relationships, both inside the home (especially for those home schooling!) and outside the home with neighbours. We also recognised that the strains of the past year impacted on stress and anxiety levels which also led to behaviour that may have been somewhat out of character. As a result, we saw an increase in the reports of noise and general neighbour nuisance. We asked residents to be tolerant, patient and kind but of course in serious cases we continued to take swift and firm action against perpetrators of serious or repeated incidents of ASB.

## Compliance & H&S (2020/21)

	Inspections required	Inspections completed	Compliance
Gas	270	270	100%
Electrical	55	54	98%
Fire Risk Assessments	30	30	100%
Fire Alarm Systems	16 per week	16	100%
H&S communal areas	35 per week	35	100%
Asbestos	42	42	100%

## Resident Engagement

We spoke to many more residents over lockdown – a highlight of the year. As a result we reviewed our Resident Engagement Policy to ensure every PCHA resident has the opportunity to positively engage with us and to play a constructive role in evaluating and improving our services both operationally and strategically. Engagement and involvement activities will be delivered in a variety of ways, enabling participation by as many as possible. We will continue to modernise our approach, and will build on our digital engagement opportunities to ensure our service is efficient and easy to access for all.

## Compliance

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic we continued to maintain a strong focus on compliance and health and safety. In November and December we carried out a full programme of Fire Risk Assessments across all communal buildings. This including individual checks to fire doors and this work is continuing. The gas and electrical safety programmes were completed with 100% compliance and fire alarm testing together with health and safety inspections of communal areas continued every week throughout the year. The chart above provides a summary of the key compliance areas.

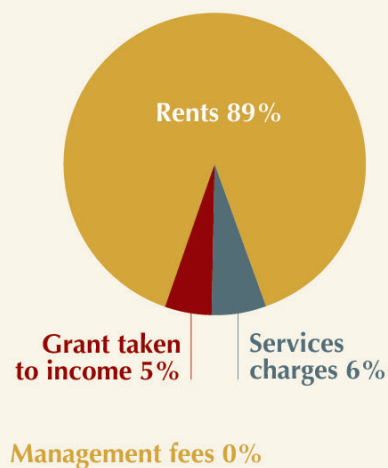
# Our Money

## PCHA annual accounts to 31 March 2021:

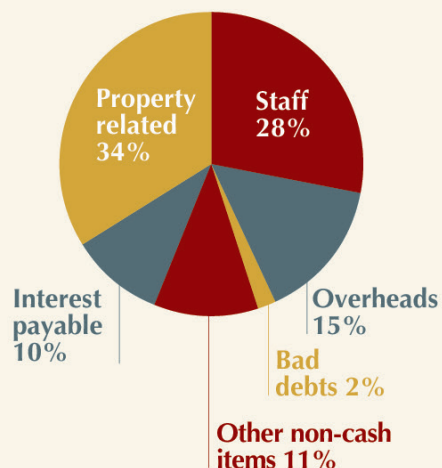
Highlights (compared to 2019/20 year)

Turnover	£1,789,000	Up 1%
Operating surplus	£426,000	Up 17%
Surplus for the year	£282,000	Up 33%
Cash	£602,000	Up 16%
Reserves	£4,530,000	Up 2%

## Where our money came from (2020/21)



## How we spent our money (2020/21)



## PCHA

	PCHA actual 2020–21	PCHA actual 2019–20	PCHA target 2020–21	peer group actual 20–21
1. Reinvestment	0.5%	1.1%	0.9%	1.6%
3. Gearing	20.8%	18.3%	21.3%	9.6%
4. Interest cover (EBITDA-MRI)	360%	240%	232%	488%
5. Headline social housing cost per unit	£4,301	£5,061	£4,751	£4,358
6. Operating margin (overall)	23.8%	20.8%	18.2%	23.1%
7. Return on capital employed	2.9%	2.5%	2.2%	2.7%

## Value for Money (VFM)

PCHA strives to achieve value for money so that we may provide more for our residents in terms of service and new homes.

We are a small, community-based social housing provider and cost cutting is not the primary driver of our Strategy. We believe quality of service is key and so cheapest is not always best value for money. Residents tell us that they value the personal and responsive service we can offer as a small community-based association, and we believe this is one of our strengths.

Nevertheless, we are committed to understanding our costs and ensuring we get the maximum return on our investment. PCHA's vision is to enhance the lives of our residents by providing excellent-quality homes and services.

## VFM Metrics

The Regulator for Social Housing has a set of core VFM metrics (a set of measurements) for our sector. PCHA's results for 2020-21 are shown in the chart above and compared to our previous year's figures, our targets for 2020-21 and the median of our peer group (the BM320, as described below).

PCHA is a member of the BM320 small housing associations' benchmarking club for London and this enables us to compare our costs and performance with other similar organisations. Of the 13 key performance metrics shown in the chart on the next page, we performed better than or equal to our peers in 7 of the 13 categories. These are shown in green on the chart. Areas where we did not match or better the peer performance are shown in orange. One of these in particular, average re-let time, was impacted by the pandemic and issues around safe site access.

## BM320 Benchmarking Report

	PCHA	London peer group median	Wider peer group median
Satisfaction — overall services - GN (%)	84	84	90
Satisfaction — quality of home - GN (%)	79	86	87
Satisfaction — listens to views and acts - GN (%)	78	70	71
Void losses — GN (%)	0.8	0.8	0.4
Average re-let time — GN (days)	66	36	36
Average days lost due to sickness absence	12	5	9
Rent collected (%)	101	101	102
Current tenant arrears (%)	4.2	3.9	2.1
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance (%)	80	86	88
Emergency repairs completed within target (%)	97	97	100
Urgent repairs completed within target (%)	90	93	98
Routine repairs completed within target (%)	98	96	97
Dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate (%)	100	100	100

We need to improve our completion of 'urgent' repairs against our target, although we are pleased to show that 'emergency' and 'routine' repair delivery against target was good. Our arrears performance remains stable although we are still impacted by a small number of large, historical cases; these are not likely to go away, particularly given the ongoing eviction restrictions placed on us due to Covid-19.



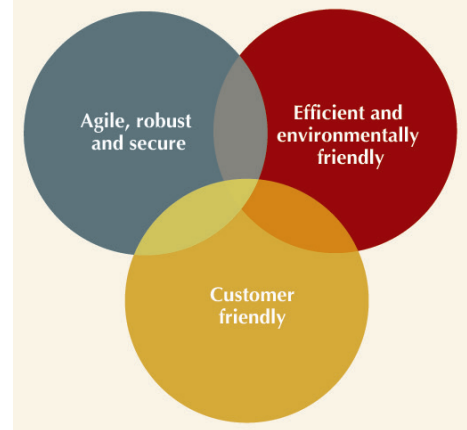


## Our Business

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 meant that we have had to adapt quickly to new ways of working and communicating as an organisation. Board and team meetings via video conferencing are no longer unthinkable and indeed likely to be the norm in the future. Indeed, the pandemic has enabled us to look at different ways of working and we have seen significant improvements in communication and engagement with residents, alongside a positive impact on team working. It became apparent that we had an opportunity to rethink how we work and deliver services to our residents.

As a result of this there was a significant rethinking of our Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) priorities as we adapted our working practices to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, we developed a new ICT strategy that was driven by a recognition of the need to meet the demand of residents, to be more agile and flexible in the way we work, and simultaneously ensure our systems are both robust and secure. Equally this strategy acknowledges the need to be more environmentally friendly in the way we work going forward.

### We aim to be:



As a result of this we have invested in new cloud-based technology, including a phone system, to facilitate a more agile way of working and we are currently investigating a new housing software system with a residents' portal to increase accessibility.

## Our people – staff

Our staff had to adapt quickly as we left the office on the 17 March 2020 and starting working from home. This was not easy but the team demonstrated their strength, positivity and resilience. During the year we saw an increased level of positive engagement with many of our residents in spite of not being in the office; this challenged our thinking about service delivery and ways of working. As a result, we reviewed our service offer to residents and increased our service hours to ensure residents can contact us easily wherever we are working from. Whilst we missed the occasional resident popping in, this new way of working allowed staff to start getting out and about a bit more once restrictions were eased.

We developed an agile working policy and invested in new technology to support this new way of working. Agile working offers us huge potential to work together differently yet effectively, and improve how we work for the benefit of all our residents. The philosophy behind our agile working is that work is something we do, not somewhere we go – work is an activity, not a place. Staff will have the flexibility to work from a variety of places and therefore we can offer more flexibility in terms of our

accessibility for residents. Going forward we hope to be much more visible outside the office and on our schemes.

**Karen Cooper**  
Chief Executive

**Steve Thorn**  
Director of Operations

**Leonie Amarteifio**  
Customer Services Officer

**Danuta Evans**  
Customer Services Officer

**Natalie Ions**  
Maintenance & Estates Officer

**Cassandra Barns**  
Corporate Services Manager

**Samantha Mason-Evans**  
Resident Support Officer

**Nina Nash**  
Tenancy Services Officer

**Mick Mendham**  
Maintenance Operative/Handyman

**Jean Mahoney**  
Tenancy Services Officer

**Roger Maddams**  
Director of Finance

## Our people – board

As of 31 March 2021 our board had ten active members, including our Chief Executive who is a non-shareholding executive member. Together members have a broad range of relevant skills and expertise. The skills and experience of the Board are reviewed periodically to ensure that PCHA has the right mix to meet both current and future needs.

**Cathy McCarthy**  
Chair

**Trevor Crook**  
Vice-Chair

**Rowann Limond**  
Chair of Finance & Audit

**Karen Cooper**  
Company Secretary

**Adeola Oke**

**Jonathan Bowen**

**Richard Ellis**

**Simon Oelman**

**Sarah Chatfield**

**Alan Begg**



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